



Report to the Mississippi Legislature

FY 2016 Impact Report



Joint Legislative Committee on Performance
Evaluation and Expenditure Review

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FY 2016 PEER Report Impacts

Impact: Education Accountability and Funding

Mississippi's Utilization of Funds Provided by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

PEER conducted this review to identify the services being provided to Mississippi students who are eligible to receive such services through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and determine the adequacy or appropriateness of these services in producing positive outcomes. PEER inquired into whether the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) and local education agencies are efficiently and effectively spending IDEA grant funding to meet the needs of children identified by the Child Find process and identifying children in need of access to the special education system and its services within Mississippi.

The report concluded the following:

- IDEA grant funding is not allocated based on an identified population of children with documented special education needs. Instead, it is allocated via a federal formula based on the prior year's grant allocations and additional amounts based on total student enrollment and the number of students receiving free and reduced-cost lunches in Mississippi. These IDEA grant funds supplement, not supplant, other sources of state and local funds to provide special education services. The local education agencies have final discretion in providing services to achieve the purposes of IDEA.
- The MDE requires local education agencies to complete and submit annual Child Find reports. Local education agencies use these reports to track and report various output measures regarding their respective Child Find efforts; then MDE reviews these reports as part of its monitoring. Regarding the receipt of services, MDE's review process for individualized education programs focuses on monitoring local education agencies' compliance with IDEA mandates and regulations rather than on results, and its dispute-resolution process does not specify the issues or concerns that underlie each complaint.
- The current accountability structure for implementation of IDEA Part B, both nationally and in Mississippi, needs improvement. While the MDE does maintain an annual performance report to track compliance and progress on selected performance measures on a statewide basis, currently no correlation can be made between how the MDE tracks and monitors performance and whether funds are being allocated to IDEA students or programs in the most effective manner (e.g., performance in relation to a specific IDEA program goal, disability type, or educational placement setting).
- IDEA Part B has historically been implemented with the primary focus on compliance with the requirements of IDEA, rather than on improving results for children with disabilities and balancing those results with compliance. However, the MDE, under guidance of the U.S. Department of Education, is in the process of implementing a new enhanced performance framework titled Results-Driven Accountability (RDA) that will place increased emphasis on student performance, especially reading performance for K–3. Even though the national trend is to use this enhanced performance framework, RDA's performance measurability and impact are several years from full implementation, pending consistent data.
- The MDE and the local education agencies should shift the focus of IDEA Part B program implementation from compliance to a system that evaluates performance. This position aligns with the recent shift toward an RDA system that is being implemented at the federal level. Focusing on performance would also align with the Mississippi Legislature's ongoing effort to revitalize performance budgeting, which requires increased accountability for the efficient and effective use of public resources.

Implementation Actions

Following the release of the Committee's report, the Mississippi Department of Education took the following actions:

- initiated modification of its on-site monitoring record review form to report substantive results-related data in each child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) plan;
- improved the IDEA complaint-tracking process;
- developed weekly complaint reports for management;
- analyzed complaint data to identify areas of concern and training;
- modified the Mississippi Comprehensive Automated Performance-based System contract to create a web-based, online tool for IDEA that enables local education agencies to submit their IDEA applications online and allows the MDE to obtain financial and program data; and
- developed an inventory to track special education and other related district supports.

A Review of the Accountability Standards of the Mississippi Department of Education

In response to a legislative request, PEER conducted a review of Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) accountability standards to address concerns of whether the standards adequately measure school performance.

State accountability standards must be designed in such a way that they effectively demonstrate actual school performance. If standards do not reflect actual student performance, education stakeholders and decision makers cannot make the appropriate decisions or necessary adjustments to improve schools' and districts' performance. MDE's accountability standards were created in order to communicate how well Mississippi's schools and districts are performing, to identify schools and districts that need improvement, and to advise decision makers on necessary adjustments. Although college and career readiness was not included in the original purpose of the standards, as Mississippi shifts toward what will likely be more rigorous standards, college and career readiness will begin to shape the overall purpose of the state accountability standards.

The Accountability Standards Task Force, the membership of which is approved by the Mississippi Board of Education, makes accountability standards recommendations to the Commission on School Accreditation. Once recommendations are approved by the commission, the Board of Education provides the final approval before new standards or changes in standards go into effect. Selected staff at the department provide information necessary for the task force to make accountability standards recommendations. According to the Mississippi Department of Education, changes in Mississippi state law, federal requirements, and the desire to make the accountability standards equitable for all schools and districts and easier to understand led to the adoption of the MDE's current accountability standards.

PEER concluded that because of the way in which Mississippi's accountability standards are currently calculated, the standards do not provide stakeholders and the public with a clear picture of how Mississippi schools and districts are performing. The calculation of the current standards makes it impossible not only to compare one school or district to another, but also to compare a school or district to itself over time. Mississippi's standardized tests are carefully constructed to ensure that a student has mastered a certain level of competency; those tests alone should provide the criterion/standard for measuring school performance.

Implementation Actions

Following the release of the Committee's report, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) reported to PEER that President Barack Obama signed into law federal legislation that reauthorized the

"Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965" (ESEA). Department staff stated that the law provides states with an opportunity to revisit the plans presented in the State's Consolidated State Plan under the "No Child Left Behind Act of 2001."

The department established an ESSA ("Every Student Succeeds Act") Planning Team to provide department senior leadership with key information related to policy and implementation. The new law includes the following indicators that will be included in a school accountability system: academic achievement; another valid and reliable academic indicator; graduation rate; English language proficiency; and indicator of school quality or success. As a result of the new requirements for the statewide accountability system, the department revised its business rules to include all five indicators for implementation in the 2017–2018 school year.

A Review of Expenditures of Mississippi's Public School Districts, FY 2005 through FY 2014

PEER conducted this review to determine how Mississippi's public school districts spent their funds from FY 2005 through FY 2014. During this period, Mississippi's public schools spent approximately 90% of their funds in the seven major budget categories of Instructional, Administration, Plant Operations, Food Services, Transportation, Student Support, and Other Programs.

During this period, Mississippi's public school districts expended a total of approximately \$39 billion from state, local, and federal sources in these major budget categories. The inflation-adjusted value of public school districts' total expenditures for the period was approximately \$42.8 billion. From FY 2005 to FY 2014, school districts' expenditures increased by approximately \$152 million in inflation-adjusted dollars. Expenditures in the Instructional category, when adjusted for inflation, decreased by approximately \$75 million. School districts' total expenditures per student increased from \$8,714 in FY 2005 to \$9,196 in FY 2014 (in inflation-adjusted dollars). Although the Instructional category had the highest level of expenditures per student of all of the major budget categories throughout the 10-year period, expenditures in that category decreased \$79 per student over the period.

During the 10-year period, PEER noted the following changes in school districts' inflation-adjusted expenditures:

- Employee benefits in all seven major budget categories increased by approximately \$119 million.
- Purchases of professional and technical services increased in all seven major budget categories by approximately \$41 million.
- Salaries of teachers and other professional personnel in the Instructional category declined by approximately \$130 million. (This does not include the teachers' salary increases in FY 2015 and FY 2016 because these fiscal years did not fall within the review period.)
- Salaries for professional personnel in the Administration category increased by approximately \$15 million.
- Expenditures for repairs and maintenance paid to individuals who were not employees of the school district increased approximately \$30 million.
- Approximately, the number of classroom teachers increased by 1.2%; administrators increased by 9.6%; student support personnel increased by 0.2%; operations and maintenance of plant personnel declined by 2.5%; and other employees (e.g., athletic coaches, assistant program directors, special education personnel) increased by 21%.

Implementation Actions

Because of the descriptive nature of the report, no state agency took any actions specifically as a result of the report. However, information in the report will be useful to legislators and legislative committees as they consider possible changes to the state's education funding formula.

The Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013: Evaluation of the Operations and Effectiveness of the Program

The “Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013” directed the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) to implement a voluntary prekindergarten program for 4-year-olds to help ensure that all children have access to quality early childhood education and development services. The Legislature contemplated funding the program on a phased-in basis, appropriating \$9 million for fiscal years 2014–2016 for the first phase. Of this amount, the MDE distributed approximately \$8.4 million to 11 early learning collaboratives and retained \$450,000 for administrative costs. The collaboratives (including 53 providers) served approximately 1,580 students in the 2014–2015 school year during the first full year.

MISS. CODE ANN. Section 37-21-51 (3) (g) requires the MDE to make an annual report to the Legislature and the Governor regarding the effectiveness of the prekindergarten program. The section also directs the PEER Committee to review the department’s report and other program data and submit an independent evaluation of program operation and effectiveness to the Legislature and the Governor before the beginning of the next phased-in period of funding.

After the first full year of implementation of the “Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013,” the average performance of students in noncollaborative publicly funded prekindergarten programs was better than the average performance of students in the collaboratives by a statistically significant amount. PEER found significant room for improvement in the implementation and effectiveness of the “Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013.” Regarding MDE’s implementation of the act:

- Although required by state law to do so, the MDE has not adopted a minimum rate of readiness as a benchmark for continued program funding. The department is researching the use of student growth as a future determinant for continued funding eligibility, possibly yielding a more lenient standard.
- MDE’s annual report does not show the rates of school readiness for each collaborative and each provider, as is required by state law.
- The MDE awarded funding to four collaboratives that utilized a prekindergarten curriculum found through rigorous research to have “no discernable effects” on student learning.
- The MDE has not assessed students’ progress on some content areas of the department’s early learning standards.
- According to PEER’s independent evaluation of program effectiveness, after the first full year of implementation, prekindergarteners in the program’s participating collaboratives achieved the end-of-the-year target score on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment less often than children enrolled in other public prekindergartens.
- PEER also found an extremely wide range of end-of-school-year assessment pass rates by program provider, by collaborative, and by curriculum. While the department and the collaboratives should be recognized for their accomplishments in implementing a state-funded prekindergarten program aligned to the state’s rigorous early childhood education standards, PEER’s independent analysis of student assessment data for the 2014–2015 school year shows that there is significant room for improvement in the program’s effectiveness as measured by student achievement.

Impact: State Agency Procurement

State Government Purchasing: A Review of State Agencies' Implementation of Recent Statutory Changes and Other Selected Issues

Since FY 2010, state agencies have spent over \$1 billion on purchases of goods and services. Proper stewardship of public funds requires that the agency making such purchases and the state as a whole ensure that public money is being wisely used.

The three state control agencies for purchasing—the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA), the Department of Information Technology Services, and the Personal Service Contract Review Board—are the ones chiefly charged with administration and oversight of purchasing by state agencies. During the 2015 Regular Session, the Legislature passed S.B. 2400 and H.B. 825 to address and alleviate concerns regarding accountability and transparency within the state's procurement system. Among other things, these bills addressed two areas that the Legislature believed to be troublesome: emergency and sole-source contracts. Additionally, changes were made to the membership and jurisdiction of the Personal Service Contract Review Board. S.B. 2400 and H.B. 825 and their accompanying regulations establish more demanding standards for certain types of procurements. As to the cost and timeliness of procurement processing, it is too soon to draw conclusions about the impact these factors might have on the control agencies and on agencies procuring commodities and services. However, it is expected that the new laws will impact the timeliness of procurements and will require better planning by state agencies.

Implementation Actions

Following the release of the Committee's report, the following agencies with purview over state agency procurement took the following actions:

- ***Department of Finance and Administration***—Promulgated rules that tracked with the recently enacted legislation. The department noted a decrease in emergency and sole-source procurements subsequent to the new laws and regulations. Worked with legislators to enact legislation to clarify the duties of a "purchasing agent." Worked with the State Personnel Board to identify incumbents in positions who should be trained in procurement, as required by state law.
- ***State Personnel Board***—Performed an extensive review of multiple states' procurement rules and nationally accepted best practices in the development of revisions to the Personal Service Contract Review Board's *Rules and Regulations*. Provided training to employees in procuring agencies to ensure compliance with the revised rules and regulations.
- ***Department of Information Technology Services***—Promulgated rules that tracked with the recently enacted legislation. Advertised the department's intent to certify each sole-source procurement request, which adds approximately four weeks to complete a certification process.

A Review of State Agencies' Use of Procurement Cards

The use of procurement cards has emerged, locally and nationally, as a preferred tool for making small purchases in government. According to Mississippi's procurement card contractor, in calendar year 2014, Mississippi's state agencies expended over \$33.5 million through the use of such cards. Procurement cards provide users with cost and time savings through electronic (versus paper-based) procurement. Procurement card programs typically generate monetary rebates, which then may be spent at the discretion of the users. The convenience of procurement cards must be balanced by proper management and oversight. As with other types of state government purchasing, transparency and accountability are vital. The Office of Purchasing, Travel, and Fleet Management (OPTFM), an office within the Department of Finance and Administration, is responsible for administering the procurement card program.

To assess compliance with state procurement card guidelines, PEER reviewed utilization of the program at three state agencies. PEER used transaction data to select three state agencies (one each of small, medium, and large size based on the amount of procurement card expenditures and frequency of card transactions in July 2015). In addition to the 60 instances of noncompliance with OPTFM's requirements for itemized receipts, sales tax, and OPTFM-required forms, PEER found other instances of noncompliance, including lapses in agencies' security over procurement cards. These incidences of noncompliance demonstrate OPTFM's inability to ensure the accuracy and legitimacy of purchases made with procurement cards at the individual agency level. PEER believes that the causes of noncompliance with procurement card guidelines in the three agencies reviewed may be traced back to deficiencies in training, monitoring, and auditing related to the procurement card program.

Implementation Actions

Following the release of the Committee's report, staff of the Department of Finance and Administration took the following actions:

- revised and reassigned certain duties of the Program Card Administrator so that the employee could devote more attention to the management of the card program;
- revised the procurement card guidelines to address training required of state agency program coordinators;
- required the procurement card banking vendor to provide monthly transaction data for all cards so that DFA staff can review the data for compliance with the procurement card guidelines; and
- required the procurement card banking vendor to provide rebates generated from the use of the procurement cards directly to each cardholding agency.

Impact: Retirement Financial Soundness

The Public Employees' Retirement System: 2015 Update on Financial Soundness, Delays in Application Processing, and Legal Issues

The majority of Mississippi public employees and/or their beneficiaries receive their retirement benefits from the Mississippi Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS). State law requires PEER to report to the Legislature on the financial soundness of PERS.

"Financial soundness" should be defined not as a point-in-time comparison of assets and liabilities, but as a multifaceted construct involving an understanding of the role of actuarial soundness in judging financial health, a broadly defined view of affordability that encompasses sustainability in light of all relevant environmental conditions, and an understanding of the role of risk and investment management in the long-term financial health of the system.

This report provides a concise overview of where the system currently stands financially, looks into the recent delays in processing of applications for service retirement benefits, and provides an update on recent legal actions involving states' attempts to modify retirement benefits for pension systems' members and retirees.

The PERS Board of Trustees recently made changes in the PERS plan's actuarial assumptions that became effective July 1, 2015. These changes were made in response to the most recent experience study conducted by the board's actuarial firm.

- **Actuarial Soundness**—The cumulative effect of the changes for the FY 2015 valuation was a one-time increase to the unfunded actuarial accrued liability of \$1.8 billion.
- **Sustainability**—The current PERS funding policy is designed to address the past volatility of employer contribution rates within the system by setting the employer contribution rate percentage to a fixed rate of 15.75% of annual compensation. The policy also targets an 80% funding level by 2042, while still reducing the plan's unfunded actuarial accrued liability. In addition to these effects, the funding policy will have the effect of creating more long-term sustainability within the system.
- **Risk Management**—The PERS funding ratio is now 60.4%, a decrease from 61.0% as of June 30, 2014. Actuarial projections show that the PERS Board's originally adopted model's funding goals of an 80% minimum funding ratio in 2042 will still be achieved.
- **Investment Management**—For fiscal year 2015, the PERS plan's combined investment portfolio experienced a return of 3.5%, and the market value of the system's assets was approximately \$24.8 billion. For fiscal year 2015, the PERS Board of Trustees continued to adhere to the asset allocation model put in place in July 2013.

Implementation Actions

As acknowledged in the Committee's report, the Public Employees' Retirement System Board of Trustees, in conjunction with the biennial experience review, made adjustments to the actuarial assumptions in an effort to present a more conservative forecast of the system's future performance. PERS staff noted that the agency has addressed the application processing challenges associated with the agency's conversion to the Mississippi Automated Retirement System (MARS).

Impact: Child Protection

Issues Related to the Increase in the Number of Children in the Department of Human Services' Custody in Hancock County

The number of children in the Department of Human Services' (DHS) custody in Hancock County as a result of allegations of abuse and/or neglect increased 148% over the past five years. This increase has strained the resources of all participants involved, including the Hancock County Youth Court, the Department of Human Services, community mental health providers, and the county's government, which must provide resources to cover certain expenses associated with youth court activities. As of December 31, 2014, Hancock County had 10.4 children in custody per 1,000 inhabitants, which is the highest number of children in custody per 1,000 inhabitants of all Mississippi counties. The average number of children in custody per 1,000 inhabitants in a Mississippi county was 1.3.

Regarding the child protection process in Hancock County, PEER identified the following forces that contribute to the number of children in DHS custody in the county:

- Three external factors identified by community stakeholders and PEER's comprehensive literature review that may contribute to an increased rate of child maltreatment in Hancock County are the illicit consumption of drugs, a transient population, and the number of children living in single-parent households. However, no causal relationships were established by the data.
- High staff turnover and heavy workloads of Division of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) workers in Hancock County contribute indirectly to the number of children in DHS custody in that county.
- The ability of Hancock County's DFCS staff to carry out their functions consistently and professionally could have an impact on the court's willingness to trust the agency's guidance and recommendations in the child protection process.

Implementation Actions

Following the release of the Committee's report, the Legislature enacted and Governor Phil Bryant signed S.B. 2179 (2016 Regular Session) to create a new Department of Child Protection Services. S.B. 2179 transferred the Division of Family and Children Services from the Department of Human Services to the new department. S.B. 2179 also creates a Commissioner of Child Protection Services appointed by the Governor. The new department has purview over such issues as those documented by PEER in Hancock County.

Impact: Infrastructure

Effects of Deficient Bridges on Selected Mississippi Public School Districts' Bus Routes

For the purposes of this review, PEER defined a deficient bridge as (1) a bridge that is closed to all vehicle traffic or (2) a bridge that is posted for gross vehicle weight limits of up to 33,000 pounds or (3) a bridge that is posted for single-axle weight limits of up to 20,000 pounds.

PEER collected route information from the 11 Mississippi public school districts that have more than 10 deficient bridges within their district boundaries to determine to what extent these bridges affect each district's respective transportation system (e.g., additional time and/or mileage added to school bus routes for detours around the bridges).

PEER selected the following 11 public school districts that were noted as having the highest numbers of deficient bridges (determined by PEER to be any district having more than 10 deficient bridges) that could affect bus routes: Amite County, Carroll County, Hinds County, Hollandale, Itawamba County, Jones County, Leland, North Panola, Quitman County, Western Line, and Yazoo County.

PEER estimated that it costs approximately \$1.70 per mile to operate a school bus in Mississippi based on maintenance costs, fuel costs, and depreciation expenses. PEER also obtained information on compensation of bus drivers from the selected school districts to calculate estimated personnel costs as a result of extended bus route travel time. PEER then applied these two pieces of information to the additional mileage and additional time reported for school bus detour routes as a result of deficient bridges. The estimated total cost of detours caused by deficient bridges ranges from \$4,284 to \$25,704 for the four selected school districts that reported detours for the current school year. While these are additional costs that the district must incur, these costs represent only about 2% or less of the respective districts' school year 2013–2014 transportation expenditures.

PEER found that there is no consistent or routine process in place for notifying school districts of posted bridges that could affect bus routes. Most of the selected districts' transportation staffs stated that they were notified of closed bridges but that they were not always made aware of posted bridges. Other reasons that could contribute to buses crossing posted bridges that could potentially be unsafe were

- no uniform safety training of school district personnel specific to identifying which bridges school buses should not cross;
- no formal incorporation of posted bridges as potential safety hazards in the state school bus safety policies;
- no formal oversight and a lack of enforcement of posted weight violations and bridges that are not visibly posted for school buses but might still be unsafe for them to cross.

Implementation Actions

Following the release of the Committee's report, a legislator introduced S.B. 2007 (2016 Regular Session) to require county engineers to provide public school districts with annual lists of bridges that could affect public school district transportation routes. The bill died in committee.

Impact: State Film Industry

An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Mississippi Film Office

Rapidly changing technology, diminished dependence on traditional locales for production, and multinational efforts to attract film production are critical factors in the present filmmaking environment.

The Mississippi Film Office (MFO) was created in 1973 by executive order for the purpose of attracting, supporting, and developing the film industry in Mississippi. The Legislature created the Mississippi Motion Picture Incentive Program in 2004 to raise Mississippi's profile as a film location and to allow Mississippi to compete with other film programs.

PEER sought to determine the differences in the MFO approach to promoting movie production in the state compared to the approaches of other states' film offices. The analysis took into consideration the current state of the film industry, the economic impact and return on investment of the incentive program, and MFO goals regarding film production in Mississippi.

PEER found the following with regard to Mississippi's attempt to attract filmmakers to the state:

- In addition to its incentive program, the Mississippi Film Office has created or supports several other resources that help it achieve its goals. These resources help Mississippi attract the MFO's specific market: small and independent films.
- State film incentive programs are controversial because they may often yield relatively low returns on investment. While the return on investment of Mississippi's film incentive program is only 49 cents on the dollar, the program has succeeded in producing a higher return on investment than that produced by many other states' incentive programs (e.g., Louisiana's program had a return of 23 cents on the dollar). It has also succeeded in achieving the film office's strategy of creating jobs and increasing local film production.
- Although Mississippi's film production industry appears to be growing, the limited size of its experienced domestic workforce, few film production educational opportunities, and scarcity of film industry-related infrastructure limit Mississippi in the size and number of film productions that it can support. The MFO believes that through the state's development of short-term film production training programs, the MFO's promotion and development of infrastructure, and continual monitoring of certain aspects of the industry, it can cultivate a competitive edge outside its specific market.

Implementation Actions

Following the release of the Committee's report, the Mississippi Film Office (located within the Mississippi Development Authority) took the following actions:

- evaluated changes to the state's film incentive rebate program to make it more responsive and responsible;
- created, in concert with the Department of Revenue, a more accurate ledger of production, from application to rebate, including local payroll and in-state spend;
- updated its crew and resource directory to make it easier to find local film resources;
- contacted the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) regarding its film professional certification program with the intent of encouraging local qualified businesses to obtain such certification;
- contacted the Mississippi State Workforce Investment Board to obtain assistance in creating a program tailored to the part-time nature of film industry jobs; and
- coordinated with the State Economist to develop methods to collect data to reflect the permanency of film-related jobs and the potential economic impact resulting from the state's film incentive program.

Impact: Legislative Support

Legislative Assistance

PEER Committee rules state that PEER staff will provide assistance to any legislator or legislative committee upon request. During FY 2016, PEER staff completed 89 legislative assistance projects, ranging from simple information and data requests to more complex direct assistance on behalf of committees or subcommittees. The following list illustrates the types of assistance provided by PEER staff:

- obtaining the number of traffic citations given in the cities that surround Jackson for the past three years, presented by gender, age, and race;
- obtaining information regarding supplemental insurance policies offered to employees of the Mississippi State Hospital, Department of Public Safety, and Mississippi Development Authority;
- determining the amounts and sources of funds of payments made by state agencies to other state agencies during FY 2015;
- determining the amount of administrative fees paid by the Division of Medicaid to MSCAN providers—i.e., UnitedHealthcare and Magnolia Health—during the most recent fiscal year;
- determining the financial condition of the Carroll County School District; and
- analyzing the potential economic impact of a proposed *Our Mississippi* bicentennial event.

Appointee Background Investigations

Since 1977, Senate committees have routinely requested PEER staff to conduct background investigations of appointees to assess each appointee's compliance with statutory qualifications and general fitness to hold office prior to their consideration for advice and consent of the Senate. During FY 2016, PEER staff completed 74 background investigations of gubernatorial and other appointees appointed to the following state boards or commissions. Some of the more notable background investigations included appointees to the following:

- Board of Education,
- Board of Health,
- Commission on Environmental Quality,
- State Personnel Board,
- Board of Trustees of Institutions of Higher Learning,
- Board of Mental Health, and
- selected state agency executive directors.

Corrections Audit

MISS. CODE ANN. Section 47-5-35 requires the PEER Committee to appoint an auditor to audit the correctional system for the purpose of reporting to the Legislative Budget Office as well as the chairs of the Senate and House corrections committees. The section specifically requires the auditor to review procurements, bids, and inventories of the Department of Corrections.

Performance Accountability

During FY 2016, PEER staff were actively involved in assisting legislative leadership in reinvigorating the state's program budgeting efforts. Specifically, PEER staff assisted legislative leadership by

- assisting in the analysis of agency requests for new program funding during the 2016 Regular Session using the

"7 Elements of Quality Program Design";

- providing support in the development of briefings and webinars made to national organizations, such as the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative, and the Council of State Governments, describing Mississippi's performance budgeting revitalization effort;
- continuing implementation of the Results First Initiative in Mississippi by identifying adult correctional system intervention programs with no evidence basis or proven through evidence-based research to be ineffective in reducing recidivism and working with the legislature and the Department of Corrections to move resources from such programs into intervention programs proven to work; and
- continuing development of accountability program inventories in each of the four pilot agencies (Corrections, Education, Health, and Transportation) established in H.B. 677 (2014 Regular Session).

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